

RESEARCH BRIEF

Organizational Network Study of the Baltimore Integration Partnership

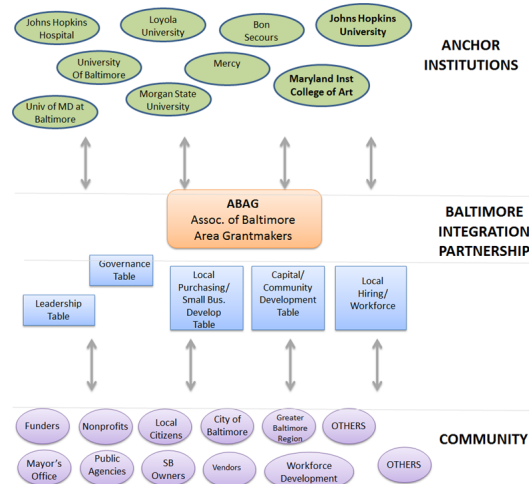
University of Colorado Denver, School of Public Affairs Center for Collaborative Governance **October 2015**

Project Background

In coordination with the Baltimore Integration Partnership (the BIP), the University of Colorado Denver’s Center for Collaborative Governance, is conducting an organizational network study to assess the ways in which the BIP partners collaborate with one another, as well as with local businesses, residents, and community-based organizations. The 2 year project is intended to identify how economic inclusion for local small and minority businesses and low-income residents is being enhanced through by BIP network

This project has three phases of evaluation:

- **Phase 1.** Assess Anchor Activities & Feedback
- **Phase 2.** Assess Community Perspective on Needs and Feedback
- **Phase 3.** Measure Connectivity of the System (including Anchors, Community, BIP)



What is the BIP?

A collaborative partnership of anchor institutions, funders, nonprofits and public organizations focused on establishing economic inclusion as the business culture of norm in the Baltimore region.

www.baltimorepartnership.org

BIP Goals

To connect local, small and minority-owned businesses to anchor procurement opportunities in Baltimore and the region

Encourage and leverage anchor real estate investment for the intentional benefit of the broader community and small businesses

Insure equitable opportunities and connect low income residents to jobs within anchors and anchor-supporting businesses.

In This Brief

- Evaluation Questions & Methods
- Findings from Phase 1
- Systems Strengths and Weaknesses
- Next Steps

This Research Brief Is Phase 1 Results

Specifically, this phase collected information on how larger systems and community factors in Baltimore relate to economic inclusion, how economic inclusion is implemented within an Anchor, and what enables or hinders economic inclusion efforts at the Anchor Institutions.

Evaluation Questions

1. How is Economic Inclusion implemented within the Anchors?
2. What parts of the system are strong and weak? What are good examples? What are the barriers? What is innovative?
3. How is this system inter-connected? Which parts of the system are impacted by which factors?

Methods

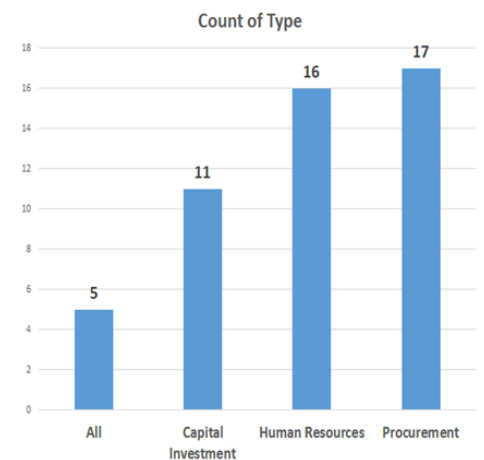
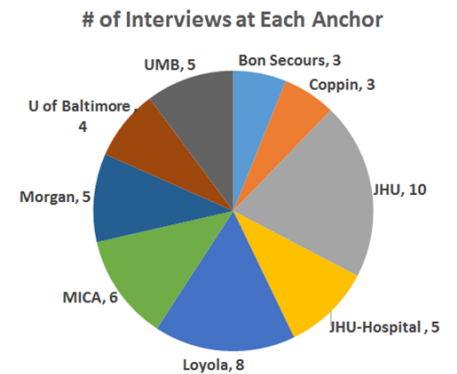
How Did We Collect Data?

From December 2014 to April 2015, UCD evaluators conducted **49 interviews** representing all nine Anchor Institutions. (Bon Secours, Coppin State, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins University, Loyola, MICA, Morgan State, Univ of Baltimore MD, Univ of MD). Interviews were transcribed, coded by themes, and summarized. **Initial analysis included 9 institutions and 11 now participate.**

What Did We Ask Them?

We asked **15 in-depth questions** including but not limited to EI work processes, opportunities, innovations, barriers and partnerships.

Who Did We Talk To?



Summary of Findings

Where is the System Strong/Weak?

Strengths:

- ⇒ Anchors each described an organizational mission towards EI
- ⇒ Anchors describe their own efforts to develop relationships with community organizations/vendors
- ⇒ Anchors are developing RFP language and setting institutional goals across the board

Weaknesses:

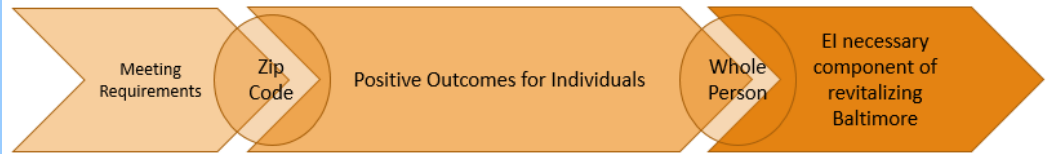
- ⇒ Anchors attribute cultural change to BIP, however express less interest in working across Anchors
- ⇒ Identifying minority and locally owned businesses is challenging
- ⇒ Vendor capacity is weak, limiting Anchors' ability to have options
- ⇒ Workforce capacity prohibits anchors from finding enough qualified people

*Interviewee
Quotes:*

“Economic Inclusion means taking a whole person perspective... reality is we are all interconnected and in such a way that not just one entity is being impacted or has input, it is a series of institutions that has failed them, and now we are in this situation, it is a systems of systems.”

Definitions of Economic Inclusion

Anchor institutions vary in the way they talk about and define Economic Inclusion. Their discourse varied from talking about “meeting requirements” to those that think of Economic Inclusion as holistic, affecting an entire system of people and institutions.



- Commitment to and understanding of Economic Inclusion varies throughout Anchor
- Everyone articulated EI as part of their work, but varied on their recognition of the term EI
- Discourse shifted from leadership (highly committed) to managers/programs (from committed to uncertain of what EI is and how to implement)
- Individual motivations and beliefs presented both barriers and facilitators to implementation

What is Happening at the Anchors and How it Maps to the BIP Strategies

BIP Strategies	Anchor Implementation
Removing barriers to facilitate the participation of local/ small/minority business in anchor purchasing	⇒ Procurement in food services and office supplies were most successful ⇒ Procurement in auxiliary services (e.g. vending, printing, laundry, etc.) identified as the most challenging
Leveraging and supporting anchor real estate investments and small business investment to intentionally maximize benefit for surrounding communities	⇒ Anchor Outreach to Community Through Partnerships & Presentations ⇒ Anchor Contract Policies Increasingly Specifying EI Requirements/Goals
Removing barriers to access and training for increased hiring of local and minority residents by anchors and anchor supporting businesses	⇒ Anchors actively recruiting through Workforce Development Agencies ⇒ HR bound by policies related to minimum qualifications, background checks, & initial screening processes
Proving the overall business benefit of economic inclusion policy and practice, ultimately creating a model for other industry sectors to adopt	⇒ Leadership’s Commitment Across the Board ⇒ Anchor Coordination Across System Through Partnerships and Collaboration ⇒ Anchor Personnel Hired to do EI at 3 Anchors

*Interviewee
Quotes:*

“While EI is something that we have always done, because of the BIP we are now thinking about things differently.”

“Our president is absolutely committed to these goals & objectives. S/he has taken the role of [our organization] as an anchor very seriously. Our mandate is to do better by the community.”

Impacts of the BIP

Shift in Organizational Culture

Respondents mentioned a shift in organizational culture at their Anchor Institutions, as an impact of the BIP. They discussed how EI is now a “way of working” and integrated into their thinking. However, the culture at each Anchor varied from a relatively new



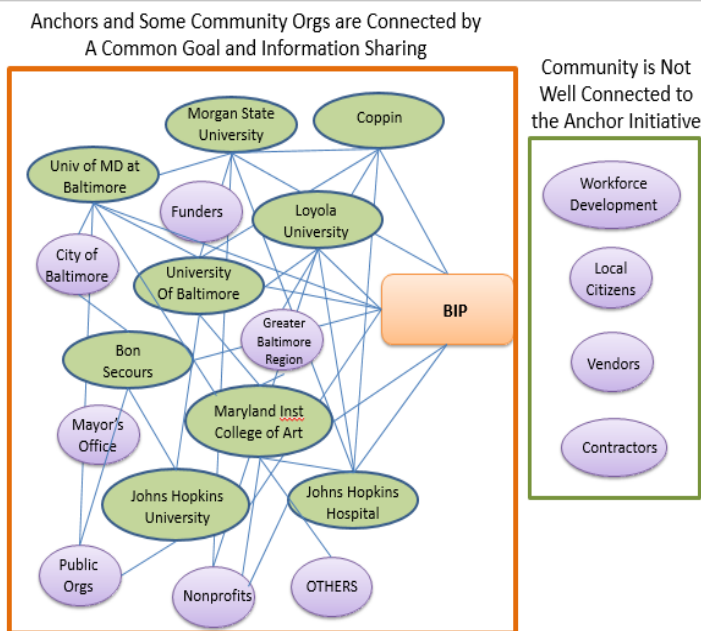
Few if any respondents discussed the next step, institutional ownership of the practice through goals and data tracking to benchmark, measure, and confirm that commitment and cultural shift as a practice.

Connecting the System

Many respondents at all Anchors discussed the impact of the BIP as a shift from a siloed to networked system. They attribute coordinated efforts to the BIP.

- ⇒ A Conduit for Networking & Information Sharing
- ⇒ Examples of connecting to community, but not systematically

“What I find beneficial with BIP is bringing all of the large employers to the table so we are hearing what is there. So much is going on, and we can get into silos, we each have a corner of it, we are each working on it.”



*Interviewee
Quotes:*

“Community capacity does not exist at a level to meet the needs of the anchors... [We had] 50 applicants and none were hired... they just weren’t prepared.”

“Workforce Development agencies are a mixed bag. I don’t know that there is enough support for these community organizations.”

Barriers to Implementation

Consistently across institutions and interviews, the four barriers to economic inclusion most often cited are:

- ⇒ Identifying Vendors
- ⇒ Vendor Capacity
- ⇒ Undeveloped Workforce
- ⇒ Organizational Structure Limitations

Identifying Vendors

- ⇒ Difficulty getting MBE Certification (duplicate systems; lack of incentive)
- ⇒ Insufficient communication of work opportunities
- ⇒ Perceptions that minority/local vendors are
 - 1) more expensive &
 - 2) varying quality
- ⇒ Brand loyalty (reluctance to switch vendors)

Vendor Capacity

- ⇒ Lack of a “Business Model” that creates capacity
- ⇒ Understanding of administrative work associated with providing services to Anchors
- ⇒ Capacity of vendors to do “big projects”
- ⇒ Ability to take credit cards, deliver, accept online orders
- ⇒ Getting “foot in the door”

Organizational Limitations

- ⇒ Organizational Structure
 - Centralized Systems (need for approvals)
 - Decentralized Systems (difficult to track process)
 - State Institutions (limited by state regulations)
 - Private Institutions (flexible, limited by HQ)
- ⇒ Data Tracking

Undeveloped Workforce

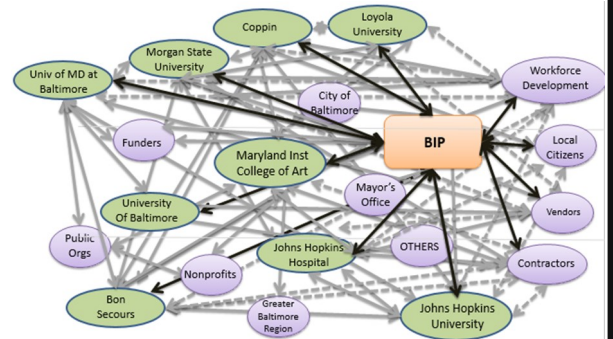
- ⇒ Criminal records as an obstacle to employment
- ⇒ Low skill levels or a widening skills gap
- ⇒ Lack of career ladders within higher education institutions (oversupply of candidates for entry level jobs)
- ⇒ Mixed reliability of, declining funds for, Workforce Development Agencies

The BIP is Addressing These Barriers

For example fostering workforce relationships, building lists of businesses (that include MBE certification, employee size, sales volume etc), conducting vendor fairs, and focusing on shared goals and institutional commitments.

How can the BIP leverage partnerships with community/private organizations and government agencies to build capacity and fill the gaps mentioned above?

- ⇒ **Coordinate Workforce Development Agencies** – bring them to the BIP table; develop a WD listserve; share best practices among WD agencies; coordinate between WD and Anchors (for more successful matches, to communicate Anchor needs across the system).
- ⇒ **Identify the “Business Model” required for local vendors to work with Anchors.** Identify a dynamic model based on type of services rendered and various needs of the Anchors. Support more MBE certification/utilization.
- ⇒ **Strategize Data Tracking:** Who is responsible for data tracking? Big effort that requires a lot of resources; Anchors are not prepared to provide these data; what would the data be used for? Instead of collecting data, can the BIP lead a data workgroup to identify attainable data, create a data management system, and identify applications of data?



Next Steps: Getting the Community’s Perspective

The next phase will explore another part of the system related to economic inclusion in Baltimore. Specifically, this phase will collect information from the community (defined as Vendors/ Contractors/ Community Agencies/Baltimore Residents) to understand a broad perspective on the anchors as opportunities for businesses and people. This phase will include:

- ⇒ Surveys to Vendors/ Contractors/ Community Agencies/Others to Collect:
 - Factors related to a business models
 - Vendor/Contractor Needs
 - Workforce Development/ Vendor Perspective on the Anchors as Opportunities

What can we do with the information?

- Develop programs to build vendor capacity
 - Build a business model
 - Provide resources to build vendor’s business models
- Strengthen the System of Workforce Development Agencies (better connect, standardize, and support)

Phase 3: Assessing the connectedness of the system.

This phase will assess the relationships that exist among anchor institutions and between anchors and community members/ agencies/vendors utilizing the PARTNER survey.

Contact Us

To hear more about this study contact:

The PARTNER Team
at the School of Public Affairs,
University of Colorado Denver

Email:
Partnertool@ucdenver.edu

Visit us on the web
www.partnertool.net

